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MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 5, 1963

TO : Mayor Hugh J. Addonizio

FROM: The Ad Hoc Committee for Improving the Operations of the Newark Commission on Human Rights.

SUBJ: CURRENT OPERATIONS OF THE NEWARK HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

I. ATTACKS ON THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Within recent weeks four separate attacks have been made upon the Newark Commission on Human Rights and Daniel S. Anthony, its executive director.

The first of these attacks, charging the Commission with nonachievement, under the direction of Mr. Anthony, was made under the name of Lee Johnson in a column in the February 9, 1963 issue of the New Jersey Afro American.

On Friday, March 1, 1963, the Newark Patrolmens Benevolent Association and the Superior Officers Association demanded that the Mayor call for Mr. Anthony's resignation.

In the Sunday, March 3, issue of the Newark Sunday News, a third police organization, Essex Lodge # 12, Fraternal Order of Police, expressed opposition to Mr. Anthony's position in support of a citizen's advisory board on police--community relations.

The general complaint of the police organizations was that Mr. Anthony was hostile to police activity, meddled in police affairs, and stood for un-American proposals that would lead to chaos in the operations of the police department.

The members of this Ad Hoc Committee question the validity of these charges and have therefore, sought this opportunity to present their reasons for doing so to you.

II. THE PROBLEM

All of the members of this Ad Hoc Committee have a basic interest in the economic, social, and cultural progress of the City of Newark.

Each member of this committee heartily agree with your oft-stated position that prejudice and discrimination have no place in our community and that firm measures must be taken to reduce and eventually eliminate these twin evils from our city.

It is, therefore, with this view in mind that we have sought this opportunity for a forthright discussion and evaluation of the work of the Commission and to offer our suggestions as to how we feel that the Commission can be made into one of the most effective and valuable agencies of your administration.

Frankly, it is our opinion that the Commission can be much more effective than it has been. In order to achieve this improved status, however, three basic elements are needed:

First and foremost, the power and prestige of the Office of the Mayor must be placed solidly behind the Commission, in all of its relationships with the municipal administrators, departments, and other government agencies, as well as the public in general.

Secondly, the Commission must be provided with all of the authority necessary to function effectively and efficiently in carrying out the provisions of the ordinance under which the commission operates.

- * Such authority must be accorded the commission, if it is to function effectively, even though the providing of such authority requires additional legislation or the testing of legislation which currently tends to circumscribe the commission's activities.

Thirdly, the Commission must be provided with an adequate staff. It must have competently trained personnel, knowledgeable in the various skills needed by the commission, and who receive salaries commensurate with their duties, responsibilities, and training.

III. WHAT THE COMMISSION NEEDS

To meet the many varied and concomitant problems in the human rights field arising out of the rapidly changing population characteristics in the City of Newark, some of the specific tools needed by the Commission, but by no means limited by these, follows:

The power to investigate all civil rights complaints in the City of Newark, specifically including employment, education, public accommodations, and the sale, rental, and financing of all housing.

Secondly, the Commission should be granted full subpoena power in order to effectively carry out its investigative responsibilities.

Thirdly, the Commission should have the power and authority to initiate investigations of its own in any civil right situation falling within the jurisdiction of the Commission.

Fourthly, the Commission should be vested with injunctive powers in order to insure that corrective measures can be taken when a violation of any civil right has been established.

The Committee recognizes, of course, that some of these recommendations in this section are currently at variance with state statutes that are implemented through the State Division on Civil Rights.

On the other hand, the Committee is well aware of the operations of the New York City Commission under the Sharkey-Brown-Issacs Law and feels that similar operations in New Jersey are possible through appropriate legislation.

IV. NEIGHBORHOOD OPERATIONS

It is a well considered belief of this Ad Hoc Committee that there should be at least three branch offices of the Commission, and that the ideal situation would be at least one branch office in each of the major neighborhood subdivisions of the city.

A second facet of the neighborhood operations would be the scheduling of periodic open forums at the neighborhood level in order to promote good intergroup relations through the informal education technique.

V. WHAT THE COMMISSION COULD ACCOMPLISH

Given the proper power and support, it is also the considered opinion of this Ad Hoc Committee, that the Newark Commission on Human Rights could relieve the Mayor of a substantial amount of the pressures placed upon his office involving the problems of civil rights.

But even more important is the fact that under more favorable operating conditions the Commission could go a long way towards preventing problems of race from reaching serious proportions in the city by initiating and maintaining the very important task of programs and projects designed to anticipate such problems, and to negate these potential problems, before they develop into matters of major community concern.

And equally important, is the fact that an improved Commission could perform the vital work of improving the image of the city through projects, programs, and activities designed to make each resident of the community proud to accept civic responsibility, and utilize every possible opportunity to make a socially useful contribution to the economic and cultural development of the community.

VI. IN DEFENSE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Finally, this Ad Hoc Committee is unanimously agreed that any deficiencies in the operations and/or achievements of the Newark Commission on Human Rights are matters over which the executive director, Daniel S. Anthony, has had no direct control.

Further, the Committee feels that Mr. Anthony is an experienced and well qualified professional in the human rights field, and deserves an opportunity under improved working conditions to demonstrate his proficiency and leadership in this field.

The Committee, therefore, urgently requests the Mayor to carefully consider the suggestions and recommendations made in this memorandum and to take such steps as are possible at this time to provide the Commission with the power, authority, and resources recommended in this memorandum.

And as a final request, the Committee urges that the Mayor issue a public statement reaffirming his faith and confidence in the Commission on Human Rights and his support of its executive director.

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